

UPPER AND LOWER CANADA (INDIAN DEPARTMENTS).

RETURN to an ADDRESS of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 15 April 1836;—for,

COPY of the INSTRUCTIONS addressed to the Governors of *Upper and Lower Canada*, relative to the EXPENDITURE incurred on account of the Indian Departments in those Provinces.

Colonial Office, }
21 April 1836. }

G. GREY.

Lord *Glenelg* to the Earl of *Gosford*, &c. &c.

[A similar Despatch was addressed to Sir *F. B. Head*, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, with the exception of the paragraphs within brackets, in pages 2 & 3, which were omitted in the Instructions to Upper Canada, and the Paragraphs in the margin inserted in lieu thereof.]

MY LORD,

Downing-street, 14 January 1836.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship, that I have recently had under my consideration the subject of the expenditure incurred by this country on account of Indians in the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. My attention has at the same time been directed to a Resolution adopted, during the last Session of Parliament, by the Committee of the House of Commons on Military Expenditure in the Colonies, the terms of which Resolution were as follows:—

“Resolved, That the Committee are of opinion, from the evidence taken, and to which they refer, that the Indian Department may be greatly reduced, if not altogether abolished; and they therefore call the attention of the House to the same, and also to the expense of articles annually distributed to the Indians, and whether any arrangement may not be made to dispense with such distribution in future, or to commute the presents for money.” With reference to this Resolution, I proceed to communicate to you the views which I have been led to adopt by an examination of all the information recorded in this department on the subject to which it relates.

The annual expenditure incurred by this country on account of Indians in Upper and Lower Canada has been limited, since the year 1830, to 20,000 *l.*; of this sum, 15,850 *l.* has been considered applicable to the purchase of presents, and 4,150 *l.* to the pay and pensions of the Indian Department.

Deferring, for the present, any observation on this latter branch of the expenditure, I feel bound, after much consideration, to express my opinion, that the time is not yet arrived at which it would be possible, consistently with good faith, altogether to discontinue the annual presents to the Indians. It appears, that although no formal obligations can be cited for such issues, there is yet ample evidence, that on every occasion when this country has been engaged in war on the North American continent, the co-operation of the Indian tribes has been anxiously sought, and has been obtained. This was particularly the case in the years 1777 and 1812; and I am inclined to believe that it is from these periods respectively that the present annual supplies date their commencement. But without attempting to pursue that inquiry, it is sufficient to observe, that the custom has now existed during a long series of years; that even in the absence of any original obligation, a prescriptive title has thus been created; that this title has been practically admitted by all who have been officially cognizant of the matter, and that all agree in stating that its sudden abrogation would lead to great discontent among the Indians, and perhaps to consequences of a very serious nature.

Of the sum expended in presents, there is, however, a portion which would appear to be placed under peculiar circumstances. It has often been represented, and lately on official authority, that of the Indians who receive presents from the British Government, a considerable number reside within the United States, and only resort to Canada at the periods of issue.

(To Sir F. Head.)
The number of these
Indians in Upper
Canada is said to be
4,000, or about one-
fourth of the whole.
I have to request
that you will direct
an immediate in-
quiry to be made
into the truth of
this statement, and
that you will

[The remark applies rather to the Upper Province than to Lower Canada, and it is therefore my intention to bring the subject under the notice of Sir F. Head, with a view of receiving from him a report upon it. But if there should be any similar instances in Lower Canada, I have to request that your Lordship will] ascertain and report to me, under what arrangements or conditions such persons have hitherto received presents; at what period their change of domicile took place; how far the faith of this country is pledged to them; and whether any bad consequences are to be apprehended from the discontinuance of their supplies.

While, however, my present information leads me to believe, that the immediate or early discontinuance of the annual presents to the Indian tribes residing within the British provinces, without a commutation, would be unjust and impolitic, I am by no means prepared to admit that they should be indefinitely perpetuated; and I have to request that you will direct your early attention to a consideration how far it may be practicable, consistently with good faith and sound policy, gradually to diminish their amount, with a view to the ultimate abrogation of the existing custom.

Closely connected with this inquiry, is the second suggestion of the Committee of the House of Commons, which I have quoted above; viz., that the presents should in future years be commuted for money payments. The possibility of such a commutation has already, at a former period, been under the consideration of the Secretary of State; but the information regarding it in this department is apparently of too contradictory a nature to admit of my pronouncing any decided opinion upon it. In July 1827, a similar measure was proposed to Lord Dalhousie by the Earl of Ripon. Lord Dalhousie's objection to it was, however, very decided, and was expressed in terms which it would scarcely be possible to strengthen. "The idea," he observes, "of proposing to the chiefs of tribes to convert the payment of presents or other tribute to them, into money, would be received with the utmost alarm. His Majesty's Government would be loaded by the execration of the country, were they to pay, in money, to Indians the large sums due to them by bargain, or by custom long established. All the societies labouring for the moral and religious improvement of the Indians would fly to His Majesty's Government to implore a repeal of the order." Sir J. Kempt, in the year 1829, confirmed the sentiments of his predecessor, although in less forcible terms. He stated, that "it would be unwise to place at their disposal any commutation, in money, for those presents, of which they would, in all probability, make an improper use."

In deference to these opinions, the idea of commuting the presents for money appears to have been at that time abandoned.

I am not disposed to question the accuracy, under then existing circumstances, of the opinions expressed by Lord Dalhousie and Sir J. Kempt; on the contrary, I think it probable that at the date of their despatches such consequences might have followed from money payments to the Indians. But since that time considerable progress, I have reason to believe, has been made in the settlement and civilization of the tribes, and it has been stated by persons, to whose experience it is impossible not to defer, that it would be very advantageous to them to receive, in money, a proportion of the annual issues. I have therefore, thought it advisable again to bring the subject under the consideration of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, and I have obtained their Lordships' sanction to a commutation of the usual presents for money, provided that no stock of the articles already consigned to the province remains on hand, and that the reductions which have been effected, or which are in progress, be steadily kept in view. If, therefore, you should upon investigation find reason to conclude that the well being of the Indians would be promoted by substituting an equivalent in money, in lieu of the articles at present issued, or of a portion of them, you will consider yourself at liberty, subject to the restrictions above mentioned, to effect such a commutation. It will be for you to judge whether this arrangement should be confined to the tribes which are settled on the land, or whether an attempt should be made to extend it also to those who still retain the habits of savage life. With
respect

respect to the latter there might still be some danger of the consequences anticipated by Lord Dalhousie. Assuming this to be a question of good faith, it seems indispensable that the arrangement should be made only with the free consent and concurrence of the Indians themselves, signified by their chiefs. And that they should feel that their interests have not been overlooked or sacrificed in forming it.

Looking however, to the moral and religious improvement of the Indians, and their instruction in the arts of civilized life, as the principal object to be kept in view in our intercourse with these tribes, I am anxious that your inquiry should be specifically directed to the practicability of effecting a commutation of the presents for some object of permanent benefit and utility to the parties now receiving them. It was with this motive that agricultural implements have of late been included among the presents, but I hope it may be possible to carry the principle into more extended operation.

From the reports in this department, it appears that not only among the more civilized and settled tribes, but even among those inhabiting the remote districts of Canada, a strong desire for knowledge has recently been evinced. In Upper Canada, schools have been established by societies and by private individuals, and are said to be well attended. [In Lower Canada also similar efforts appear to have been made, though perhaps not with so favourable a result.] These circumstances, combined with the general docility of the Indian tribes, lead me to hope that a scheme of a more general nature would not fail of ultimate success. I cannot, of course, pretend to enter into the details of such a scheme; it is sufficient for me to impress upon you the readiness and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to co-operate to the utmost of their power in its promotion. With this view they are prepared, should you think such a measure practicable, and if the consent of the Indians can be obtained to it, to sanction the application of at least a portion of the sums now expended in the purchase of stores and presents, to the erection of school-houses, the purchase of elementary books, and the payment of resident schoolmasters, for the benefit of the Indian tribes; nor, if so important a commutation could be effected, would they think it necessary to postpone its commencement from any considerations of economy, in regard to articles which may have been already consigned to the colony for distribution, and which might in such a case remain on hand. Upon this subject, however, I shall be anxious to receive from you, at as early a period as possible, such suggestions as the means of information within your reach may enable you to offer for the guidance of His Majesty's Government.

It remains for me now to notice the expenditure on account of the Indian department. Of this I do not hesitate to express my opinion, that it bears an undue proportion to the whole amount of expenditure under consideration. It amounts in [Lower Canada to 1,814 *l.* 3 *s.* 4 *d.*, while the whole sum appropriated to disbursements on account of Indians in that province are only 6,000 *l.* per annum. Of this amount, 1,814 *l.* 3 *s.* 4 *d.*, 168 *l.* 6 *s.* 8 *d.* is for pensions, and 1,645 *l.* 16 *s.* 8 *d.* for salaries, in which latter sum is included 270 *l.* paid to five missionaries and 20 *l.* to a schoolmaster. The remainder is consumed in the salaries of officers,] the object of whose appointment, is the maintenance of the connexion with the Indians, and the distribution of the annual presents. From the evidence adduced before the Committee of the House of Commons on Colonial Military Expenditure, it would appear that the duty of distributing the presents, even if that system should be maintained, might be wholly performed by the existing Commissariat Establishment in Canada. If the distribution of presents be not continued, whether by reason of their commutation for money, or of the application of the price of them to purposes connected with education, the services of the Indian Department might still more easily be dispensed with. In this branch of the expenditure I am inclined to think that an extensive reduction might immediately take place, and with this view I am anxious to direct your Lordship's early and particular attention to the subject; I would suggest that you should call upon Mr. Commissary-general Routh, to report to you upon this branch of the question. The attention which that gentleman has devoted to the whole subject, the ability with which his reports to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury have been drawn up, and the suggestions which he has already made of reductions in the annual expenditure, must entitle his opinion to considerable weight. In reporting upon this branch of the inquiry, you will furnish me with requisite information, as to the length and nature of the services of the individuals

Omitted in
Despatch to
Sir F. Head.

(To Sir F. Head.)
Upper Canada to
2,329 *l.* 10 *s.*, while
the whole sum
appropriated to
disbursements on
account of Indians
in that Province
is 14,000 *l.* Of
this amount of
2,329 *l.* 10 *s.*, 572 *l.*
is for pensions, and
1,757 *l.* 10 *s.* for
salaries to officers,
the object, &c.

individuals now on the establishment of the Indian Department, with a view to the consideration of any claim which they may have to remuneration in the event of their services being discontinued. In the mean time you will not consider yourself at liberty to fill up any vacancy which may occur in the establishment. As it is not possible that I should receive your Lordship's answer to this despatch, before the period at which it will be necessary to lay upon the Table of the House of Commons, the Colonial Estimates for the year 1836-7; it is not my intention to make any reduction in the sum to be required for the ensuing year. But it will, at the same time, be distinctly intimated to the House of Commons, that the vote is only taken provisionally, that steps are in progress for ascertaining the practicability of immediate reductions in the expenditure on account of Indians, and that His Majesty's Government entertain a confident hope that they will not be compelled in future years to make so large a demand for this service upon the liberality of Parliament.

I have, &c.
(signed) *Glenelg.*

UPPER AND LOWER CANADA,
(INDIAN DEPARTMENTS.)

COPY of the INSTRUCTIONS addressed to the
Governors of *Upper and Lower Canada*, relative
to the EXPENDITURE incurred on account of the
Indian Departments in those Provinces.

(*Sir George Grey.*)

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
27 April 1836.*
